

Leesburg Standing Residential Traffic Committee Minutes of Monday, May 5, 2003

The Leesburg Standing Residential Traffic Committee met on Monday, May 5, 2003, in the Lower Level Conference Room of the Municipal Government Center, 25 West Market Street, Leesburg, Virginia. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present

Elizabeth Whiting, Chair

Vice Chair Ric Knight

Councilmember Mervin Jackson

Planning Commissioner Lyle Werner

Gabriella Kelemen

Peg Coleman

Andrew McClellan

Town Staff Present

Mike Bomgardner

Calvin Grow

Nick Colonna

Citizens present

Jane Stockton

Heather Blake

Craig Lane

Heath Stockton

Greg Blake

Jim Cunningham

Steve Johns

1. *Minutes:* Gabe Kelemen requested that paragraph 7 of the March 31 minutes be clarified to note: “Based on Mark’s advice that under Virginia law bicyclists are treated the same as operators of motor vehicles, Gabe Kelemen noted that serious cyclists would never use sidewalks and, in situations where main routes into town are not cyclist-friendly, they look for the established back routes.” (Clarifying language underlined.) On motion by Ric Knight, seconded by Nick Colonna, the minutes of the March 31, 2003 meeting were unanimously approved as corrected.
2. *Public Comment:* Jane and Heath Stockton, Heather and Greg Blake and Jim Cunningham addressed the Committee regarding their request for all-way stop signs at the intersection of North Street, N.W. and Wirt Street, N.W. They indicated that while the residential parking permit program had evened out the flow of traffic for the most part, that the limited sight distance for traffic entering North Street from Wirt Street, coupled with the young children in the neighborhood and from the St. James pre-school present an undue risk of injury or death. (See discussion in item 3 below.) Steve Johns thanked the Committee for support of southwest quadrant traffic calming initiatives in their budget, as approved by the Town Council. (See discussion in item 4 below.)
3. *North Street, N.W./Wirt Street, N.W. all-way stop request:* The Committee heard Mike Bomgardner’s staff report, which after weighing the benefits and drawbacks of the all-way stop proposal, recommended against the installation as unwarranted. The Committee and the residents acknowledged that speeding really is not the problem; the lack of sight distance, narrow street profile and heavy on-street parking make even 25 mph dangerous to pedestrians. While the Committee has avoided making the prevalence of

young children in a neighborhood a determinative factor in its decisions, since neighborhood demographics change over time, the presence of the preschool program at St. James Church is an ongoing reality that exposes children to harm in such close proximity to traffic.

The Committee considered whether other traffic calming measures would address the threat presented and concluded that inasmuch as most of them were designed to reduce the speed of traffic, often by reducing the apparent travel way available, they weren't appropriate to the conditions presenting the risk in this instance. Instead, they concluded that this was an instance where all-way stops presented the best solution to the problem. On motion by Ric Knight, seconded by Gabe Kelemen, the Committee voted to recommend that the Town Council install all-way stop signs at the intersection of North Street, N.W. and Wirt Street, N.W, with Calvin Grow and Mike Bomgardner voting nay. In response to the question "what happens next?" Calvin Grow explained that this would be sent to the Town Council for action, with the Committee recommendation attached as part of the package and that the May 27th meeting is the earliest it can appear on the agenda. Liz Whiting said that she would write a letter outlining the Committee's recommendation and would plan to attend the Council meeting to outline their position.

4. *FY'04 Budget Request:* Calvin Grow reported that the Town Council had approved a budget of \$41,500 for FY'04, dropping the pedestrian/bicyclist campaign and design of the Edwards Ferry Road/Plaza Street N.E. pinch point improvements. Liz Whiting noted that in a tight budget year, the Committee budget actually increased about 18% and that she saw that as a strong vote of confidence by the Town Council in the Committee and what they were attempting to achieve. Peg Coleman presented information regarding "Streetprint Paving" indicating that the textured crosswalk improvements may be substantially cheaper than the estimates provided by the County for their Loudoun Street crosswalk and expressed the hope that the \$21,500.00 approved by the Town Council for southwest quadrant improvements might actually be stretched to fund six sets, rather than three. The Committee asked Peg Coleman and Steve Johns to set up a meeting at which locations for the crosswalk and pinch point improvements could be reviewed and fixed, and urged them to prioritize their "wish list" so that everyone would be on advance notice as to the order in which projects would be dropped if necessary to stay within budgeted funds.

Regarding the southeast quadrant pedestrian improvements, Craig Lane suggested that the Committee give priority to the crosswalk upgrade to replace the crosswalk into Cool Spring Elementary School across Tavistock Drive, and to think about reprogramming the crosswalk across Kincaid Boulevard to the Community Center to other projects since he believed that it would be substantially more than the budget would allow. Vice Mayor Jackson indicated that he felt it would be worth talking to the Kincaid Forest

developers to see if they might assist with extra funding that might be needed for this improvement.

5. *FY'03 project status:* Calvin Grow presented preliminary engineering designs for the Edwards Ferry Road/Catoctin Circle stop sign installation and South King Street landscaped entry feature. Calvin Grow indicated that cost constraints would make it difficult to include landscaping. Lyle Werner questioned whether landscaping was included in the way-finding signage budget approved by the Town Council. Staff was not sure, but felt that the budget may not include those. The Committee asked that the procurement of these two projects be coordinated with the Committee so as to allow solicitation of affected neighborhoods for donation of landscaping plants to bring about the quality of result that the Committee felt would keep momentum building in support of their traffic calming initiatives. The Committee felt strongly that these features must be attractive to keep support of the community and validate the Committee position that not only will the devices calm traffic, they will function as neighborhood amenities.
6. *Leesburg Sidewalk Master Plan and South King Street Trail:* Nick Colonna reported that Lee Phillips would be attending the Committee's June meeting and would be able to update the Committee on these projects. Liz Whiting noted that during the April 8th Town Council meeting, Councilmember Buttery had asked that the jurisdiction of the Committee be expanded to include sidewalks, and observed that some formal revision of their mission as expressed in Council resolutions would probably be needed. Nick Colonna said that the preliminary reaction to plans submitted for the South King Street Trail was that they neglected to adequately address landscaping concerns; further, that the Planning Department was just gearing up to staff the work for developing a sidewalk master plan, and that more useful information would be available at the June meeting as to both these undertakings.
7. *Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Master Plan:* Peg Coleman reported that she had been monitoring this project as part of her Safe Trails role and that the draft report is scheduled for presentation to the Board of Supervisors May 14th. Peg Coleman invited the Committee to attend. The plan is to follow the Board presentation with presentations to Loudoun's towns, then seek Board approval in September 2003.
8. *East Market Street improvements:* Liz Whiting noted that during her April 8th Town Council appearance Frank Buttery had asked that the Committee review the pedestrian accommodations in the pending East Market Street improvements. She further noted that she didn't know that a Council vote on the contract award was scheduled at the April 26th meeting and that, accordingly, the Committee's role was exceedingly narrow as a result.

Calvin Grow walked the Committee through the plans and the Committee favorably responded to the extent of the landscaping shown and the brick pedestrian crossings planned at the intersection of East Market Street and Catocin Circle. After Lyle Werner regretted the missed opportunity to improve the entry into the downtown historic district, the Committee voted unanimously on motion by Lyle Werner, seconded by Andrew McClellan, to support pavement imprinting with the planned white striping at the intersection of East Market Street and East Loudoun Street, if existing funding is available that can be allocated to that purpose.

9. *Way-Finding Signage:* The Committee noted that both their original FY'04 recommendation for a landscaped gateway sign project on North King Street and the FY'03 budget item for such a project on South King Street were overtaken in part by the Way-Finding signage initiative spearheaded by the EDC. Calvin Grow noted that the final location recommendations were before the Town Council next Monday (May 12, 2003). The Committee felt that their FY'03 proposal for a landscaped island entering the historic district from South King Street was closely associated with the way-finding signage proposed for that location and that the two projects should be officially linked. On motion by Lyle Werner, seconded by Gabe Kelemen, the Committee voted to encourage that placement of the way-finding sign planned on South King Street at the entry to the historic district be coordinated as closely as feasible with construction of the traffic calming improvement in the same location under the Committee FY'03 budget improvements to as to assure that pleasing and effective project result.
10. *Committee member concerns:* Lyle Werner noted that traffic-calming plans have been prepared for Route 15 in the vicinity of Lucketts and that they are gorgeous. Lyle Werner also noted that the speed of traffic on South King Street in the Georgetown neighborhood was creeping upward again. In light of the fact that the landscaped island improvements are planned for construction this summer, the Committee felt that the appropriate response was to share that information with the neighborhood and to urge residents to seek enhanced police response in the interim. Ric Knight forwarded a concern that clean-up work may remain to be completed in connection with the recent trail construction along Fairview Drive within the neighborhood. Ric Knight also inquired about the inadequacy of blend lanes in both directions where West Market Street enters the Route 15 By-Pass but agreed this was beyond the scope of the Committee's area of operations. Andrew McClellan noted a problem with drivers passing on the right along Lawson Road in the vicinity of Beauregard Estates. Staff agreed to review the situation and make recommendations at the June meeting. Andrew McClellan also noted that the ongoing dangers of parking along Tolbert Lane by parents dropping off and picking up children from the playing fields will only become more dangerous as Freedom Park traffic is added to the mix. Evidently, the

School Board advises that it is a Parks & Recreation Department problem and the Parks & Recreation Department advises the opposite.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m. The next meeting is Monday, June 2, 2003 at 7:00 p.m. Staff is to contact Liz Whiting if anything arises needing Committee consideration in the interim.